



March 8, 2022

STATEMENT OF THE WATERBURY REGIONAL CHAMBER ON *SENATE BILL 318 AN ACT CONCERNING CAPTIVE AUDIENCE MEETINGS.*

Chairs Senator Kushner and Representative Porter, Vice Chairs Senator Cabrera and Representative Sanchez, and Ranking Members Senator Sampson and Representative Arora, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on *Senate Bill 318 AN ACT PROTECTING EMPLOYEE FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND CONSCIENCE.*

The Waterbury Regional Chamber, which serves 14 communities in Greater Waterbury and represents the interests of more than 900 member businesses, opposes *Senate Bill 318* which is an infringement on management rights. The state should not dictate how management at any business interacts with their employees.

This proposed bill would restrict communication between business and its employees, inhibiting important communications and relevant discussions on legislative or regulatory matters. Legislation like this would harm existing businesses in our state, negatively influence entrepreneurs, and discourage businesses to relocate to Connecticut. If enacted, this legislation would adversely impact businesses and their employees who discuss topics such as politics, civics, community, religion, and more with customers or vendors.

Similar “captive audience” legislation has been proposed by the General Assembly in the past. In April of 2018, Attorney General George Jepsen issued a formal opinion regarding a captive audience bill before the General Assembly. He stated that captive audience legislation was pre-empted by federal law and warned lawmakers that passage would be challenged by the courts.

For these reasons, the Waterbury Regional Chamber urges the committee to oppose this measure. Thank you for your time and consideration to this testimony.

Joseph Violette
Director of Public Policy & Economic Development